

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell and Alexander Graham Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, September 1881, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. (on envelope Sept. 1881.) My dear Mrs. Bell:

I see by your letter to Alec, received this morning, that you have already heard of our plans of going to Europe. They are not yet definitely settled, but Alec is very anxious to go and has already written to see if we can give up our house. Now I want to tell you our reasons and see if you don't think them pretty good. You know Alec has not been well for nearly a year past and the doctors say that entire rest from mental labor is necessary to avert serious constitutional trouble. I have consulted several physicians in American and in Europe and they one and all say the same thing, no serious trouble now but danger of it if he does not rest. We hoped he would take this rest this summer and he had laid out plans of camping out etc., all of which the President's illness stopped. While in Washington he seemed better, but on his return he felt the effects of the long excitement and my illness coming on top has thrown him completely back and our physician says he resumes his winter's work now at his peril and that a journey in Europe with the ocean between him and his work will do more to restore him to complete health than anything else.

Though I have been very well I am not yet strong, in fact I have had to go back to bed twice and am still there now, and it will be the Dr. says some months before I can hope to regain complete strength, so for me too, he advises European travel. My children are just the age for such a journey, too young to mind the travel and yet not so 2 young but that I can leave them with Mamma for days at a time while we go off alone. In all probability I shall never have such a chance to travel until my children are grown up and married and Alec will never go without me so that in every way this seems too good an opportunity to

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be lost, especially as my family are in Europe and may be there for years and I may not see them otherwise. I have written at length because I do feel that it is very hard on you all to start off this way again, but I do really feel as if Alec's whole life's health, if not his life itself may depend on our going and he is if possible more anxious than I to go, for as he says we have now money enough to do it as we never had before and never may again as with each year our expenses increase and soon we shall have houses to maintain. It was he who proposed this plan. I want to go for I long to revisit the scenes I saw many years ago and to go further into strange countries and I want to see my friends, but once I am at home again and know they are coming too I shall never want to cross the ocean again. (From here on is in Dr. Bell's handwriting.) "What never?" Hardly ever. Dear Mamma don't believe half my little girl has said. I am all right although I need rest, but a European tour is a thing Mabel and I long to make and as she says we do not know when we may be able to go again.

A.G.B.

Can you and Mr. Bell not come and make us a little visit in Cambridge. I would go down to see you, but Alec won't hear of it. We shall sail, if we go, about the 1st of Oct. Mamma, Grace and Alec go to Washington perhaps next week, if I can go to Cambridge then, and will stay at our house.

3

I would write more, but a most abominable bright yellow fog has fallen over this place and makes writing most trying to the eyes. It is worse than the London fogs for it is so bright, just like looking at the sun through stained yellow glass. They say it is the first time such a fog has ever been here and some say woods are on fire.

Ever so much love. Mabel.